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ABSTRACT

The paper reviews literature relating to the developing of work socialization or employment skills in young mentally retarded children. The following areas are covered: work socialization for normal children in school settings, the concerns raised by critics regarding work socialization, the extent to which work socialization for young retarded children is parallel to that in typically elementary schools, the extent to which an analysis of work socialization for typical children provides guidelines for desirable features in curriculum and classroom practice for retarded children, and nontraditional sources of information for establishing meaningful work socialization for retarded students. Among the criticisms of the work socialization system are the costs to the students of work socialization in the schools and the limited access which retarded students have to gainful employment. Differences in work socialization between normal and retarded students include the amount of time required and the level of teacher expectation. Three procedural strategies to identify work socialization skills useful for retarded students in the workplace are--ecological inventories, use of retarded workers as resources, and involvement of advocacy groups. (SW)

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MUST NORMALIZATION MEAN SETTLING FOR THE NORM?
SOCIALIZATION OF RETARDED STUDENTS TO THE WORLD OF WORK

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SOCIALIZATION OF YOUNG RETARDED STUDENTS TO THE WORLD OF WORK

Preparing retarded* students to function as "productive members of society" has been a stated objective of the educational establishments of this country for many years, and it is a goal on which school personnel, children identified as retarded, and their parents all agree. It is commonly accepted that development of the skills and attitudes needed to obtain and be successful at an adult job begins in the earliest years of schooling (Brollin, 1976). However, beyond this point, there is little information available to teachers and parents of young students identified as retarded which might serve to further specify the skills their children will eventually need.

In this study, the following questions will be considered:

1. What constitutes work socialization for typical children in school settings?
2. What are the concerns which have been raised by critics of this work socialization?
3. To what extent does work socialization for young retarded children parallel that which exists in typical elementary schools?
4. To what extent does an analysis of work socialization for typical children provide us with guidelines for desirable features in curriculum and classroom practice for retarded children?

*Throughout this paper, I use the words retarded and persons classified as retarded interchangeably. By using the word retarded, I do not mean to say anything specific about the individual's characteristics, skills or potentials; rather, I am speaking of that person as a member of a defined social category.

5. What additional, non-traditional sources of information will help in the establishment of meaningful work socialization for retarded students?

The scope of what is considered under the heading of work socialization is the full range of skills, attitudes, habits and perceptions which will have an impact on adult outcomes for retarded students in terms of the types of jobs for which they will be hired, the possibilities for their successful employment at those jobs, and the quality of life which they will be able to sustain with their earnings from those jobs.

Work socialization includes the acquisition of employment skills -- skills which are directly applicable by adults on the job. For the young student, work socialization also includes "pre-employment" skills -- that is, skills which have no direct counterpart in the adult working world, but which must be mastered for the child to have continued access to training for the adult world of work. An example of an "employment skill" is the ability to show up at a specified location at a pre-designated time -- the skill of showing up punctually at the classroom is related to the skill of showing up at the time clock. An example of a "pre-employment skill" is the ability to line up quietly at the door before going out for recess -- such behavior is rarely called for in the workplace, but such pre-employment skills constitute a child's continued "admission ticket" to classes in which necessary skills may be taught.

It is usually in conjunction with "pre-employment skills" that another important facet of work socialization takes place -- the acquisition by the child of skills, perceptions and attitudes concerning his or her relation with peers and superiors. Content in this area is typically acquired

through the "hidden curriculum" (Jackson, 1968); the teacher has in his or her lesson file no instructional units on "consolidating hierarchical relationships," but the child gets the message just the same.

Skills and attitudes acquired in work socialization can be characterized in terms of their benefits and costs. Among the long-range benefits of work socialization are an expanded field of employment opportunities, increased economic security, and heightened status in the community. For young children, mastery of the skills and attitudes related to work socialization may lead to increased opportunities in terms of access to experiences in the school in less rigidly controlled settings (e.g. getting to go to the library), extracurricular activities (e.g. Cub Scouts,) and increased responsibilities (e.g. getting to take the attendance forms to the office). However, these benefits are achieved at some expense; the "costs" of work socialization can be analyzed in terms of the social rules and modes of behavior with which the student must conform, the alternative modes of behavior which the student must avoid and reject, the student's loss of autonomy, and the student's acceptance of his or her subordinate position within the social structure.

Critiques of regular education and special education

For any system of public service delivery, including institutions which provide education, health care, or public assistance, critics of the system are likely to be heard calling for change in two very different ways. On one hand, critics may seek to alter the structure or priorities of the institution or service so that it will change the way it effects those who already have access to the system. On the other hand, the current status

of a system may be criticized for the inequality of access which it presents to differing segments of society. For example, the content and methods of medical education, and even the ultimate objectives of that education, have been subject to scrutiny and revision. At the same time, medical schools have until recently been criticized for the limited access which is provided to women and members of minorities.

In comparing the work of critics of regular education with that of critics of education for retarded students, we find that one important focus in the critical literature of regular education is an analysis of the ways in which school socialization constrains children and limits them to a narrow range of behaviors serving the interests of the social status quo (Apple, 1979; Sharp & Green, 1975; Bowles & Gintis, 1976). These critics primarily address the costs to the student of work socialization in the schools. Critics of special education, however, often focus on the failure of the educational system to establish those skills which would allow retarded students to gain admission to that world of work (Edmonson, 1974; Falvey, Ferrara-Parrish, Johnson, Pumpian, Schroeder, & Brown, 1980; Olshansky, 1972; Sarason & Doris, 1979). Their primary concern is with the limited access which retarded students have to gainful employment in this country. Both types of criticism point up important issues within today's educational institutions; by and large, however, an analysis of work socialization in regular education settings which addresses the costs of such socialization has not been applied to populations of children identified as retarded or handicapped.

One example of the analysis of schools and teachers as agents of cultural reproduction, and thus of the status quo, is the work of Apple and King (1979). Apple and King described the behavior of a teacher and her students during the first several weeks of a kindergarten year, and analyzed the teacher's behavior in terms of the ways in which it served to define the reality of the children in the class. They observed that the children quickly came to make differentiations between objects and activities which were considered "work," and those which were considered "play." "Work" was always teacher-directed; "play" took place during free-time activities, and during the observation period, children never chose to use "work" materials during play-time. Children were praised for trying and for following instructions; quality of their work was not treated as if it were of major importance. Children were praised for what they didn't do -- not talking out, not playing with balls after gym time was over. In summary, the kinds of behaviors which were systematically strengthened, and the messages given to children as to what constitutes a "good worker," all centered on obedient participation in, and acceptance of, the hierarchical system.

Such socialization is not limited to the so-called "traditional" kindergarten. Sharp & Green (1975) have documented similar forces at work in a "progressive," "child-centered" school located in a British working-class housing project. In one of the classes observed in their study, they noted that:

...rules about how to behave toward other children, how to deal appropriately with the equipment, what attitudes and sentiments to express toward the teacher and the various activities, assumed considerable significance in the social structure of the classroom... The type of behaviour expected becomes more exacting as the child gets older. The children have to learn to discriminate when it is

necessary to seek permission to undertake an activity, for example, painting, feeding the rabbits, playing with the big bricks and when it is up to them to help themselves. They have to cue in to her frame of reference and learn to anticipate her requirements and become 'responsive' to teaching. (Sharp & Green, 1975, p. 91)

In situations such as these described by Apple and King (1979) and Sharp and Green (1975), work socialization for the young student requires the student to learn to devalue that which is not initiated by the authority-figure; to learn to accept the authority's evaluation of the student's achievement, while disregarding his or her own perception of what has been accomplished. The student must also learn to ignore the intrinsic properties of the job at hand (how enjoyable or challenging it is, for example), and focus instead on the job's extrinsic properties, such as its acceptability or unacceptability to the authority.

It is useful for the purposes of this paper to further subdivide the work socialization skills established in regular primary classes into passive skills, in which the student follows the rules by not fighting, crying, disagreeing, interrupting, and so forth, and active skills, in which the student follows the rules by following instructions, listening, sharing, and so forth. As will be discussed below, such a distinction has particular importance in a discussion of the perceived "incompetence" and "deviance" of students who have been classified as retarded.

Comparison of work socialization for "retarded" and "typical" students

In response to the question, "Do we socialize retarded children to the world of work as we do for non-retarded children?" the answer must be, unfortunately, "Yes and no." I say "unfortunately," because education for

retarded students tends to include primarily the negative aspects of work socialization, and fails to include those aspects of work socialization which might provide real economic and vocational opportunities for retarded students.

Many of the objectives of what it means to be a "good worker" in school are the same for retarded as for non-handicapped children -- excellence takes a second place to compliance, acquiescence to authority is a first step toward any subsequent accomplishment, and the relationship between teacher and student takes precedence over all other relationships in the classroom setting. The characterization by Apple and King (1979) of the kindergarten class in which "personal attributes of obedience, enthusiasm, adaptability and perseverance are more highly valued than academic competence (p. 57)," could easily describe most classes for young students labeled as retarded.

However, work socialization for retarded and non-retarded children differs significantly in the amount of time during which the establishment of basic hierarchical relationships form a major focus of the teacher's effort. The socialization described by Apple and King in a normal kindergarten has largely taken place within the first part of the kindergarten year; in the situation they described, teacher and students quickly came to share perceptions and expectations of what "the rules of the game" were. Once such a common set of rules and perceptions exist, teachers are likely to work with students on more "advanced" work skills: students may be taught to work more independently, and on activities with a greater academic focus. Also, students' skills in conforming to class rules are

likely to be used as a pedagogical tool in teaching them about acceptable ways of behaving in society.

In contrast, the same basic socialization which characterizes the first few weeks of schooling for a normal child is likely to be drawn out for several years with students labeled as retarded. This "drawing-out" may occur for a number of reasons. Each year, the teacher of students labeled as retarded at any primary or elementary grade level is likely to find him or herself with a few students who have just acquired the label of "retarded" for the first time, frequently because of a failure to perform in school-normal ways. In such circumstances, class rules are likely to reflect the "lowest common denominator," to be as restrictive as is "required" by the least "socialized" child.

Teachers with low expectations of their pupils, regardless of the specific labels which have been attached to those students, may be more attentive to work socialization skills than they would be for those children for whom they assume the skills are established at home. In studying a teacher in a "progressive" British working-class school, Sharp & Green (1975) find that,

Given her generally pessimistic attitude toward the children it is, perhaps, understandable that she finds it necessary to put such stress on what we could loosely call "socialization." This assumes a greater importance in her work than it might were she dealing with "normal" children. "These children" regard her as a source of security, she feels, and it is vitally important for her to provide "the security of rules they badly need." It should not be thought, however, that the teacher is satisfied with the way she has to interpret her role in the classroom. Were she dealing with "normal" children, she would be able to proceed with the real "professional" activities of teaching. Indeed, she thinks that many of the things she has to do are demeaning and should have been done by sensible parents, but, given the nature of her pupils and their generally bad training, circumstances compel her to engage in "school training."
(p. 92)

Also, the cycle of low expectation and self-fulfilling prophecy (Guskin, 1977) arising from a deviancy approach to students classified as retarded may lead teachers to be less persistent in their efforts to establish the active skills and attitudes of work socialization, such as enthusiastic participation and eager compliance, and may rather lead to a focus on passive and dependent behaviors which make the class a more congenial environment for the teacher, such as "not getting out of your seat," "not interrupting," "waiting to start until the teacher tells you," and so forth. It is very possible to be a success in an elementary-level class for retarded students by being "cheerful," "affectionate" and "cooperative", even while cognitive, adaptive and motor skills are going unmastered or even unattempted; such failure is likely to be attributed to the child's disability, and is unlikely to result in changes in the placement, or even in major adjustments in the curriculum. Gold (1980) has characterized the emphasis of special education as being the elimination of deviance, which more or less corresponds to the passive socialization described above. According to Gold, special education tends to neglect the establishment of competence, that is, the fostering of active work skills. Because, according to Gold, "the more competence an individual has, the more deviance will be tolerated in him by others" (1980, p. 172), the failure to establish competence renders retarded students particularly vulnerable.

In our field the overwhelming emphasis has been on the elimination of deviance, rather than the development of competence, as the terms are used here. The goal seems to be to bring individuals up to zero. This results in the all-too-frequent situation where a retarded individual who is existing successfully in the community, or on the job, commits some minor infraction, such as picking his nose, swearing at someone or showing up late, and is fired or institutionalized. Clearly, this would not be the effect of such infractions if there was competence to maintain a positive balance. But with a mean of zero, the slightest deviance might precipitate exclusion. (Gold, 1980, p. 173)

On the other hand, success at school skill mastery may not lead to the same payoffs which are available for nonretarded students. As Gold & Ryan (1980) have pointed out, the attribution of causes for the retarded students' performance is likely to have as great an effect on how the student is assessed as is the objective quality of that performance.

It has been demonstrated that the retarded and their instructors have low expectations for retarded individuals' ability. Consequently, they underestimate the kinds of tasks that can successfully be performed, and they do not give the retarded person deserved credit for success. Thus, successes are attributed to factors other than ability, which means that observations of a retarded person's manifest ability do not affect estimates of his or her potential ability. Failures are attributed to the retardation, so it is assumed that the retarded individual's inability to perform is both stable and unintentional. The latter factor implies lack of responsibility for failure, which may or may not be beneficial for the retarded individual. If the retarded individual does not have the potential ability to succeed at the task, the unintentional factor may be beneficial, because he or she is not punished for an inability that cannot be controlled. However, if the retarded individual does have the potential ability to succeed at the task, the unintentional factor may be harmful, because the individual will not be trained, and he or she will not try to succeed at something that can be done. (Gold & Ryan, 1980, 218-9).

The effect of this drawing-out of the establishment of "pre-employment" skills is that retarded students in many cases reach adolescence with extensive practice in compliance, but with little or none of the experience which normal children have had access to once that compliance has been established, such as working more or less independently, and achieving goals which are meaningful ones in society's consensus (Bowles & Gintis, 1976).

Toward the norm

At first analysis, there seem to be two options available to anyone who is responsible for designing curriculum and classroom procedures for

retarded students; a choice between these options would seem to represent a studied resignation to the acceptance of the lesser of two evils.

On one hand, any program for students labeled as retarded could be allowed to continue in much the same fashion as it had previously, with little systematic effort made in the area of work socialization. Such an approach is likely to occur in most situations today, owing to continued social perceptions of retarded students as objects of pity (Wolfensberger, 1975), or as members of a "surplus population" (Farber, 1968). Retarded people are not commonly perceived as having the potential to be productive members of the workforce, and such participation is considered by some to be a liberal pipe-dream. If efforts expended toward enhancing the participation of retarded students in the economic mainstream are considered to be a waste of taxpayer's money, such efforts have very little chance of survival in times of budgetary cutback such as these, times when dependency-fostering busywork settings are not only not being abolished, but are being extended to new segments of the population (Korris, 1982).

On the other hand, advocates of normalization may be successful, despite national trends, in making entry of retarded citizens into the occupational mainstream a high priority in a particular state or community. Potentially, such a commitment could focus either on the retarded students themselves, or on the environments in which they might be employed. Brollin (1976) and others who have spoken of the development of a "work personality" have identified that the effective work personality represents a congruence, a "rightness of fit" between the worker's skills and needs on one hand, and the job's requirements and available reinforcements.

Efforts toward normalization focused on the workplace would attempt to restructure work environments so that they become settings in which retarded individuals would be more likely to succeed at gainful employment. Authors in this field have proposed such changes as human factors engineering being used to redefine existing jobs and restructure the work environment to make it more accessible to disabled people (Wade & Gold, 1978). A variety of procedures for restructuring on-the-job training for retarded people, such as apprenticeship programs and extended time for on-the-job training, would also enhance the "fit" between people identified as retarded and a wide variety of employment settings.

However, this symmetrical view of the worker and the workplace ignores the realities of a society in which there is typically an "employer's market", and where workers' control of the workplace represents a hostile, alien concept. Although both jobs and workers can potentially change to create such a rightness of fit, it is only the workers who always and inevitably must change. Practically speaking, any community commitment to providing students who are labeled as retarded with entry to the vocational mainstream must focus on fostering those skills which will allow the student to "make it" under present, non-ideal conditions.

In an effort to identify those skills, single-minded adherence to the normalization principle might lead us to attempt to duplicate, in programs for the retarded, the contents and methods which so powerfully serve to socialize students in regular education programs to the world of work. Perhaps, far from having identified a series of classroom management procedures to be shied away from and avoided, radical critics of public educa-

tion may have provided us with a set of guidelines for the true mainstreaming of retarded students. The analysis by Apple and King and others of how this socialization process is present from the earliest moments of schooling onward could be taken as a catalog of essential curriculum content for retarded students throughout their schooling.

Such a notion is not to be rejected lightly. With all its faults, the workaday world is typically seen by those labeled "retarded" from the outside of the factory fence. Many advocates of normalization for retarded students would consider it a phenomenal accomplishment if schools, rather than shunting retarded students into total economic dependency, were to become their coveted ticket of admission to the exploited, overmanaged working class. As Olshansky (1972) has stated:

The routine and rhythm of work, the work tasks, the socializing associated with work, all these become a part of the pattern of normalization. Leaving the house each morning, boarding the bus, punching in, coffee break, arguing with friends or foes, lunch, back to work, and then returning home, another day passed and another dollar earned are parts of the work process needed to give and sustain a person's image of himself as normal (p. 159).

Beyond the norm

It would be ironic if the same procedures whereby most children are regimented and tamed should become the means for the realization of the goals of normalization and full acceptance in society for people classified as retarded. Much that we know about students classified as mentally retarded would tell us that they resemble typical students closely enough so that those procedures which prepare non-handicapped students for real success within the economic system are likely, with some modification, to be effective with students classified as mentally retarded as well.

However, an investment of effort in regular education's typical methods of work socialization as curricular objectives for retarded students should not take place before considering whether or not there is a strong correlation between work socialization at the elementary level, and economic stability and mobility for the adult. Apple and King (1979) point out that

...the most economically important 'latent function' of school life seems to be the selection and generation of personality attributes and normative meanings that enable one to have a supposed chance at economic rewards. (p. 50) (emphasis added)

Certain attitudes and behaviors fostered in schools are commonly regarded as the resources which one needs to "make it." Parents, teachers, television plots, all may serve to reinforce these notions. However, if the skills fostered by work socialization practices in schools are not in fact the ones which the student will need when he or she is old enough to enter the work force, then that student may be little better off than the 19th-century Horatio Alger devotee who spent his time in public parks, awaiting the opportunity to rescue a rich man on a runaway horse.

What do students, whether retarded or not, really need to make it in the world of work? Certainly, some of the behaviors and attitudes fostered in typical elementary school work socialization are of importance in a student's succeeding in the world of work. Those characteristics of workers which Bowles & Gintis (1976) identify as being valued by employers and teachers alike -- perseverance, dependability, consistency, identification with work, empathizing of orders, punctuality, deferral of gratification, predictability and tactfulness (pp. 137-8) -- are likely to continue to be valued in the workplace in the future. However, it is easy to see that mastery of such skills by themselves will not guarantee the acceptance of people labeled as retarded into the work force.

Other authors have identified additional skills required by retarded people which bear little or no resemblance to those which our schools tell us are the hallmarks of "good workers." Short (1979), in describing research geared toward identifying skills which will increasingly be needed by all students as they first enter the work force, has pinpointed adaptability as a key feature which will be required of workers, regardless of the ways in which the economy and the workplace change in the future. According to Short, the most important feature of adaptability is skill in problem-solving, including the ability to focus on critical dimensions of a situation, and the ability to generate many potential solutions to a given problem, rather than focusing on the habitual ones (p. 11). Among the problem-solving strategies which he describes is the ability to learn in a new situation by standing back and observing what one's fellow workers are doing. Robinson & Robinson (1976) summarize research studies which identify particular personal adjustment and work habits as being of importance in determining employment outcome. These include initiative, perseverance, self-confidence, cooperation, cheerfulness, social mixing with other employees, respect for the supervisor, and understanding and efficiency in work (p. 462).

Olshansky (1972) speaks of the utility of skills which allow the person who has been labeled as retarded to "pass" when he or she enters the work force; that is, to conceal his or her previous diagnosis and treatment as retarded. He mentions skills and attitudes which are required if one is to carry off the deception inherent in "passing." Shevin & Klein (1982) identify several abilities which retarded students will require to succeed in vocational and other settings as adults, which rarely if ever are estab-

lished in the typical curriculum for retarded students: self-initiated activities, self-evaluation of one's work, and facility in making choices. Klein & Babcock (1979) describe the importance of skills in self-assertive behavior for retarded students wishing to enter normalized adult living, including entry into the economic mainstream.

Apparently, success in adult vocational and economic life depends both on skills which are traditionally fostered in schools, and those which are not. As Shevin & Klein (1982) have described, retarded students are particularly vulnerable in skill areas which are typically outside of the curriculum for non-handicapped students -- those skills which most children "just pick up." They identify retarded children as living in a social world in which

...opportunities for informal learning are seriously restricted. Children classified as retarded are frequently isolated from their non-labeled peers, due in part to lack of peer acceptance, parental protectiveness, or parental reluctance to travel with disabled children in public places.

These limitations on opportunity for interaction, exploration, and ordinary experiences which enhance self-reliance have severe consequences for young retarded learners. (pp. 4-5)

Shevin & Klein conclude that, because skills such as self-assertiveness, choice-making and mutually supportive peer interaction are frequently not learned by retarded students "on the street" as they are by most other children, it is important for teachers who recognize the values of such skills to seek ways of fostering them in the classroom.

Doors to the real world

In both the traditional and the nontraditional lists of skills identified as being important for retarded students' entry to and survival in the economic mainstream, there exists little empirical data to support the inclusion or exclusion of particular items. Rather, identified items tend to reflect the political and philosophical orientations of the author or researcher. Nor is a single list of "musts" for the retarded worker likely to be of much practical value, since it will, almost by nature, be either too general to provide a curriculum designer with any other than the most vague guidance, or so specific that it addresses the needs of particular students with particular skills and deficits in a particular workplace in a particular community, with little or no generalizability to any other settings. In the remainder of this paper, I will briefly sketch three procedural strategies which may serve to identify work socialization skills which are likely to be of real use to retarded students when they are of age to enter the workplace in their particular communities.

1. Ecological inventories. Belmore & Brown (1978), have devised procedures for assessing individual workplaces in terms of their potential for the employment of severely handicapped students. Falvey, Ferrara-Parrish, Johnson, Pumpian, Schroeder, & Brown, (1980) have applied Belmore & Brown's procedures to the performance of an ecological inventory, cataloging the range of workplaces available in the community for severely handicapped students. The procedures described by Belmore & Brown and Falvey et al. are specifically directed toward adolescents and young adults who are severely handicapped. However, an extension of the proce-

dures outlined by Falvey et al. may be applicable to the identification of work-related skills for all younger students identified as retarded, regardless of diagnosed level of disability.

In Falvey et al.'s ecological inventory, there is an analysis of the performance of both the retarded student, and of typical workers in the community who currently hold the jobs under examination. Their inventory involves the identification of discrepancies between the skills displayed by workers on the jobs being considered, and those displayed by the retarded adolescents or young adults being considered for the various jobs.

The generation of such comparisons of the performance of "retarded" potential workers and successful workers in the vocational mainstream of a given community could provide the teachers of young handicapped children in the community with a rich informational source. An examination of the inventories assembled would reveal patterns of discrepancy which could then be addressed longitudinally throughout the curriculum for those young students.

Given the structure of schools in most communities, elementary special educators rarely have opportunities to interact and problem-solve with secondary teachers and vocational adjustment personnel. However, this represents an avenue of information which would more than adequately reward the individual and institutional efforts required to set such interactions in motion.

2. Retarded workers as resources. In his book Deschooling Society, Ivan Illich (1971) describes an idealized approach to education in which each citizen could potentially serve as a "skill model," demonstrating to the interested learner how one successfully practices a given skill. He also identifies a new role for teachers, in which they act as resources to assist potential skill models and their potential learners in "making the connection."

On a limited basis, those of us currently operating within the authoritarian, self-serving educational system which Illich criticizes might make use of some of Illich's concepts in establishing connections between young students currently classified as retarded, and older workers, once classified as retarded, who are now functioning effectively in the workplace. A certain amount of facilitation by the teacher of the interaction between the retarded child and the "successful adult" may be required. However, we are likely to overestimate both the amount and the importance of such facilitation. As Illich (1971) states:

What makes skills scarce on the present educational market is the institutional requirement that those who can demonstrate them may not do so unless they are given public trust, through a certificate. We insist that those who help others acquire a skill should also know how to diagnose learning difficulties and be able to motivate people to aspire to learn certain skills. In short, we demand that they be pedagogues. People who can demonstrate skills will be plentiful as soon as we learn to recognize them outside of the teaching profession. (p. 127) (emphasis added)

Less effective, but possibly more realistic, might be the support by school systems of field experience for teachers of retarded students. In these field experiences, teachers would be relieved

of their classes for a period of several months in order to receive on-the-job training and to work at jobs which their students are likely to eventually hold.

3. Involvement of advocacy groups. Until recently, the activities of advocacy groups addressing their efforts to the needs of retarded children have focused their activities on obtaining educational services which had not previously been provided. Moreover, they largely address issues most relevant to adolescents and adults classified as retarded. However, such groups represent an important potential source of information and influence in the establishment of curricular content and classroom practices for young retarded children which will foster productive and relevant work skills. Organizations of parents such as local chapters of the National Association for Retarded citizens can provide useful input through outreach by experienced parents of older retarded students to parents of children newly entering the special education system.

Of even greater potential importance is the involvement of self-advocacy groups, such as People First. Within the last few years in this country, advocacy for retarded citizens is being carried out by those citizens themselves. The perspective of politically aware people who know the schools, institutions and rehabilitation centers of the United States from the inside represents a resource which is as valuable as it may be threatening to those who wish to continue to "speak for those who can't speak for them-

selves." Such coalitions of retarded citizens (or, as the president of California's People First has described them, of "severely labeled citizens,") could provide young retarded children with the support of adults who have shared many experiences that the younger students are now going through. Contact with organizations such as People First would also provide young students with a visible model of how people, even those classified as retarded, can work together with other members of their group toward common goals.

Conclusion

Entry into the world of work will continue to remain a primary objective of educational services for retarded students in the years to come. The adult success of former "retarded students" will probably continue to be the single most important criterion by which comprehensive educational programs for retarded students may be evaluated. One important step toward meaningful preparation of retarded students for real adult work roles is to look to many sources for information and insight. We can look to regular education as a source of desirable features to be included in curriculum and classroom design for retarded students; we can look to critics of regular education for information on the pitfalls and abuses which we must avoid; we can look to fellow special educators working with older students for information on skills our young students will need when they are grown; and we can look to new sources of information, such as workers and advocates, for insights which are not currently available to young students in schools, regardless of their classification.

The three potential new sources of information mentioned earlier are not ones which are likely to be welcomed in most traditional schools for retarded children, since they call for a functional, pragmatic analysis of who possesses the information which it is important for retarded students to acquire. The idea that a "dishwasher," a "mere parent," or an "adult retardate" might know something that one's students need to learn may be very disturbing for many teachers and administrators. Without movement in this direction, however, work socialization for retarded students is likely to continue to promise much and deliver little.

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